

THE STATE OF THE COUNCIL - 2005
Jan Drago, President of Seattle City Council

Welcome Statement

MAYOR GREG NICKELS HAS BEEN IN OFFICE FOR THREE YEARS NOW, AND HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED A LOT IN THAT TIME. THE COUNCIL HAS HAD THREE YEARS TO WORK WITH TO HIM, AND WE HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THE PRIORITIES OF THIS CITY THROUGH COOPERATION, COLLABORATION AND MUTUAL RESPECT. I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS THE WAYS IN WHICH THE CITY COUNCIL HAS ACCOMPLISHED DOING JUST THAT IN 2004

THIS SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL BELIEVES IN THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING. IN 2004 WE LISTENED HARD. AS WE DEVELOPED OUR AGENDA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, WE MET WITH HUNDREDS OF SEATTLE CITIZENS AT SIX COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS—LISTENING TO THEIR IDEAS AND DREAMS FOR MOVING SEATTLE FORWARD. THE AGENDA WE DEVELOPED AFTER THAT SHAPED THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES FOR 2004-2005.

IT IS ALSO OUR MANDATE TO DEBATE AND SET POLICY DIRECTION FOR THE CITY, TO ADOPT SPENDING PRIORITIES, AND TO BE A BALANCE OF POWER. IF YOU LOOK AT THE SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED 2003-2004 CITY BUDGET, YOU CAN GET AN IDEA OF SOME OF OUR SUCCESSES IN THESE AREAS.

LAST YEAR, THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL FACILITATED THE APPROVAL OF THE MONORAIL PROJECT'S ALIGNMENT AND TRANSIT WAY AGREEMENTS. WE SECURED AN ADDITIONAL 3.8 MILLION-DOLLARS FOR TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE 2005 BUDGET, AND WE LED THE PASSAGE OF THE *FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY* TO HELP MEET THE NEEDS OF SEATTLE'S FAMILIES.

WE CELEBRATED THE OPENING OF THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S NEW DOWNTOWN CENTRAL LIBRARY AND SEVEN NEW BRANCH LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT THE CITY. WE CONFIRMED JORGE CARRASCO AS THE NEW CITY LIGHT SUPERINTENDENT. WE PASSED LEGISLATION ELIMINATING THE LEASE LID ON THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, AND NEGOTIATED THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF HOTLY-CONTESTED NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES CONCERNING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF NORTHGATE MALL.

WE LED THE EFFORT TO FORMULATE A LONG-TERM VISION AND MASTER PLAN FOR PUBLIC ATHLETIC FIELDS AND A WETLANDS AT SEATTLE'S NEW MAGNUSON PARK. AND, LAST, BUT NOT LEAST: AFTER LISTENING LONG AND HARD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND THROUGHOUT THE CITY, WE RESTORED FUNDING CUT FROM THE CITY BUDGET FOR HUMAN SERVICES ...RESTORED ALSO, THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S BOOKMOBILE SERVICES TO CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY AND THE HOMEBOUND.

WE DID ALL THESE THINGS, BECAUSE OUR LISTENING LED US TO ACTION.

NOW, WE'RE THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT WE MEMBERS OF THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL HAVE A HEALTHY VARIETY OF OPINIONS. WE WORK HARD INDEPENDENTLY AND COLLABORATIVELY TO SOLVE THE ISSUES THIS CITY FACES. EACH OF US IS PROUD TO FREELY QUESTION THE STATUS QUO AND DEBATE NEW IDEAS—ALWAYS TO ARRIVE AT STRONGER, MORE INSPIRED DECISIONS FOR THE PEOPLE OF SEATTLE.

IN THAT SPIRIT THIS COUNCIL BEGINS ANOTHER YEAR IN WHICH WE WILL, AGAIN, VISIT NEIGHBORHOODS AND TALK WITH THE SHOPPERS AND THE SHOPKEEPERS, WALK THROUGH COMMUNITIES AND CHAT WITH THE NEIGHBORS—ALL THE WHILE, ASKING: HOW ARE WE DOING? AND WE'LL LISTEN AGAIN AND AGAIN TO HEAR WHETHER WE'RE ON TRACK WITH WHAT PEOPLE HAVE ELECTED US TO ACCOMPLISH.

WE BELIEVE THAT IN THIS WAY WE STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE IN—AND CREDIBILITY FOR—SEATTLE CITY GOVERNMENT.

TODAY, WE THANK THE MAYOR FOR SHARING HIS VISION FOR OUR REMARKABLE CITY.

THANK YOU.